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ABSTRACT

This booklet covers advisory committees in vocational education, particularly vocational agriculture. Focus is on the following topics: advisory committee defined, types of advisory committees or councils, suggested steps in organizing and implementing advisory committees, functions of advisory committees, suggestions and precautions in the effective utilization of advisory committees, why there has been reluctance in using advisory committees, and minutes of advisory committees (includes some sample minutes). A summary of a study done to determine the values of advisory councils for high school vocational agriculture programs is appended. (EM)

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Advisory Committees for Vocational Education

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Advisory Committees for Vocational Education in Wisconsin
Agriculture Education

F. J. Doering, Consultant

All schools conducting vocational programs in the secondary schools of Wisconsin are required to form advisory committees (councils) to assist in planning, developing, and evaluating their programs. The Bureau for Career and Manpower Development of the State Department of Public Instruction feels this to be a vital step if program changes are going to meet the needs of the individuals enrolled in the programs, as well as the local community.

Historically, advisory committees have been a part of the vocational agriculture program in Wisconsin for many years. They are of more recent vintage in the vocational areas established through the Vocational Education Act of 1963. Though most vocational teachers recognize the importance and benefits derived from a well organized advisory committee, far too few operate their program with an effective functioning committee. Prior to 1965, it is safe to say only 5-10% of the vocational programs in the secondary schools made any productive use of advisory committees.

Since the writer is most familiar with advisory committees in vocational agriculture, most of the emphasis will be directed in that particular area. It is certainly a well established fact that advisory committees all possess similar characteristics and what applies to agriculture could apply equally well to other vocational disciplines.

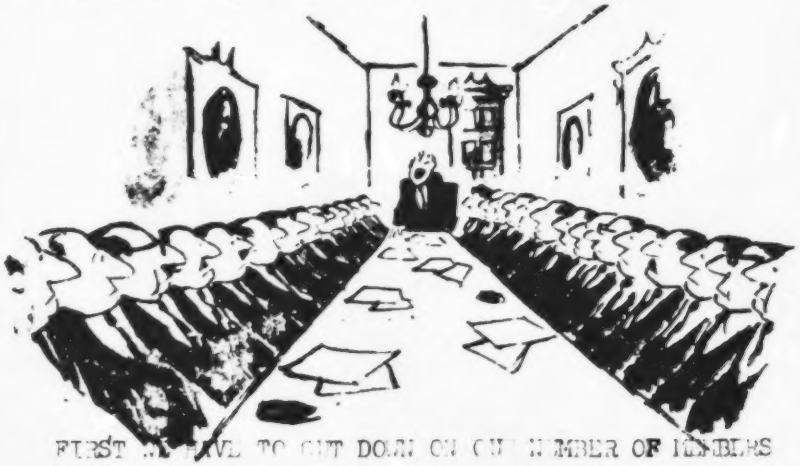
Advisory Committee Defined

A vocational education advisory committee may be broadly defined as "a group of persons chosen from the business and industrial complex served by vocational education, to advise those responsible for planning, implementing, and maintaining vocational education programs." Vocational education, more than any other type of education, needs close cooperation with the community. It trains workers for productive jobs and lives. Advisory committees serve the school and the public by providing a very necessary and vital communicating link.

Types of Advisory Committees or Councils

To distinguish between different types of committees, let us examine some of these for clarification purposes.

1. Steering Committee--is usually a temporary committee formed for the purpose of answering the question, "Should we have a vocational program in the school?" If so, in what particular area(s) of instruction? This committee is generally composed of 10-25 persons representing education, industry, labor management, civic groups, and parents. The committee's responsibility is to gather facts and make a recommendation regarding the vocational program for the school. After the recommendations have been made, this committee is generally disbanded in favor of advisory committees.



FIRST ... TO CUT DOWN ON ... NUMBER OF MEMBERS

2. Advisory Committee--has been defined earlier in this paper. Advisory committees generally are separate for each vocational area, i.e. vocational agribusiness with a separate committee, distributive education a separate committee, etc. However, some small communities have found it advantageous to form one advisory committee that would represent and provide direction for all vocational areas.

3. Less frequently we find a third advisory committee called a cooperating committee. This committee would most apt be found in a large city with multiple high schools. The purpose of this committee would be to give support and help to the coordinating teacher in a number of ways:

    a. Placement of minority students on jobs.
    b. Gather direct feedback from employers.
    c. Promote the program.
    d. Provide a team of speakers and resource people.
    e. Provide materials and equipment for classroom, especially in area of individual instruction.

4. State Advisory Committees--are divided into two areas--committees representing the individual disciplines and a broad state committee appointed by the Governor representing the total vocational education program in the state. The State Council consists of twenty members, the make-up of which is designated by the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968. The Wisconsin Advisory Council employs an executive secretary to handle much of its administrative work.

The Vocational Agriculture State Advisory Committee is quite typical of the individual disciplines and will be used for illustrative purposes in this report.

The Advisory Committee for Vocational Agriculture is composed of 15 adults. Six of these are professional educators, four are farmers from farm organizations, and five are employed in related agriculture businesses and industries. Youth is represented on the committee in the persons of the State President of the FFA and the State President of the Wisconsin Junior Dairymen's Association.

The Advisory Committee meets four to five times annually. A rotational plan was adopted for replacing and appointment of new members. The State Advisory Committee for Vocational Agriculture has formulated position papers on the agricultural mechanics program, occupational experience programs, extended contract policy for vocational agriculture, and is in the process of completing a paper on the articulation of high school and post-

secondary programs in Wisconsin. Typical topics discussed during the year included such items as state aid for the summer programs, inservice needs of vocational agriculture instructors, resource unit development, the FFA Alumni Foundations, status of the agriculture pilot programs, curriculum trends in vocational agriculture, summer duties of instructors, teacher supply problems, general progress of the programs and enrollments in Wisconsin, and career education (a summer conference theme).

5. National Advisory Council on Vocational Education--was created by Congress through the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968. It is composed of twenty members plus an executive director appointed by the president of the United States. Members have diverse backgrounds in labor, management, and education. This council is charged by law to advise the Commissioner of Education concerning the operation of vocational education programs, make recommendations concerning such programs, and make annual reports to the Secretary of HEW for transmittal to Congress. Donald McDowell of Wisconsin has been a member of this committee for several years.

Suggested Steps in Organizing and Implementing Advisory Committees

The school wants the active participation of those people in the community who can contribute most to the success of the vocational program, and thus, one of the most important considerations is the selection of the personnel of the committee.

Three essential criteria should have priority in selecting your individual advisory committee members:

1. Experience--It is not essential that all members be older persons with many years of working experience. It has been found that frequently young farmers and other young businessmen are more apt to work hard in support of the school than older people who have lost contact with young people. On the other hand, a representative number of members should have successful tenure in the vocational area they represent. While successful first-hand experience is a must for the vast majority of your membership, be aware that youth membership on this committee for secondary vocational programs is becoming increasingly important.

2. Time--An advisory committee often meets several times a year, and members must maintain a close relationship with school activities. It is necessary, therefore, that having sufficient time to devote to committee work must be considered a criterion for membership. It may not always be in the best interest of the committee to select a community leader who has his hands in so many things that he lacks time, energy, and the enthusiasm to do the job well. Each situation must be judged on its merits, as the old say "if you want something done, ask a busy person to do it," is not without justification. Nonetheless, time is a prime consideration in selecting committee members.

3. Character--Members of advisory committees should possess outstanding character, under which term may include such desirable qualities as intelligence, integrity, courage, a keen and balanced mind, an unselfish spirit, a cooperative nature, and a strong sense of responsibility. It is important to note the most aggressive persons in community affairs are not always the best committee members. Be careful to avoid people interested in furthering the selfish interests of a small group rather than having the interests of the entire community at heart. Know your people and try to attain a balanced representation, not necessarily avoiding those with opposing viewpoints.

There are any number of methods used in selecting and appointing advisory committee members, but all of them have one thing in common--the selection is always a cooperative effort between the school and the group to be served. The following steps are generally considered proper:

a. The local board of education should give formal authorization for the committee. This authorization should be secured through the school superintendent.

b. Formal invitation to membership on an advisory committee should always come from the board. This is necessary from two points of view.

1) It helps to remove any reservations the board might have that the advisory committee would usurp its rights and responsibilities and thus foster disharmony between the committee and the board.

2) Members of the newly formed advisory committee will have a healthier concept of their proper place in the school organization when they are appointed by the highest authority. They realize they are responsible to the board and will make their recommendations to this group.

c. The vocational instructor, together with the local vocational coordinator and/or the administrator, should prepare policies regarding purposes, relationships, memberships, and operation.

d. Membership on the committee is most significant.

1) Prepare a prospective list - representative as to location, age, sex, business, industry, labor, and management.

2) Secure approval of list.

3) The vocational instructor and the local vocational coordinator should discuss purposes, term of membership, and other significant points with prospective committee members.

4) Committee size generally varies from seven to 12 members. The instructor, vocational coordinator, administrator, a member of the board of education, and perhaps a local representative of employment service, could serve as ex-officio members.

e. School administrator (following board authorization) should appoint members by letter informing them of time and place for initial meeting.

f. The first meeting should be organizational with the vocational instructor, vocational coordinator, or president, board of education, serving as temporary chairman.

1) Members should be oriented to policies, purposes, and functions.

2) Officers should be elected.

3) Possible activities of the committee should be discussed including a planned agenda for the next meeting.

4) Good minutes of proceedings should be kept and distributed. (Minutes of last advisory meeting are required to be filed with the application for Federal aid in Wisconsin.)

g. Frequency of meetings should be established. Regular meetings should be held and kept informal. Number of meetings is a local decision, but six meetings a year lasting no more than two hours is one recommendation. Where advisory committees have been functioning for some time, less frequent meetings may be held, perhaps as few as twice a year.

Two areas of major concern are the responsibilities and duties of the elected chairman of the advisory committee and the vocational instructor or other designated school representative.

There is general agreement that the chief duty of the chairman is concerned with presiding over the meetings of the committee. He works closely with the school administration at all times and should be consulted when the agenda is being prepared. The chairman usually appoints subcommittees and represents the committee when such representation is requested or desired.

The designated school representative in Wisconsin is a decision to be made by the local school. Wisconsin's secondary vocational programs are somewhat unique in that a vast majority of schools employ a local vocational education coordinator (LVEC). It is a generally accepted practice to have the LVEC be the school representative on the steering committee for vocational education, but when the advisory committee represents a specific area, such as agriculture, then the agriculture instructor should be the designated school representative. The LVEC should be an ex-officio member of this advisory committee (holding membership by virtue of his position).

What should be the duties of the school representative? It should be made immediately clear that the school representative (vocational instructor) is present to seek advice, not to give it. Routine duties that may be assigned the vocational instructor (as an ex-officio member) include such things as:

1. Reading and keeping minutes.
2. Notifying members of time and place of meeting.
3. Arranging meeting rooms in the school.
4. Providing statistical and/or descriptive information concerning the program.
5. Operate in a consultative capacity.
6. Play a major role in developing the agenda for the meeting.
7. State problems involved in his program and present them to the advisory committee for discussion and recommendations.
8. Responsible for obtaining maximum benefits from committee members.

Functions of Advisory Committees

As indicated previously, advisory committees were mandated by the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968. Despite this action it seems apparent that some programs have not formed such committees, while others are not making effective use of their committees. If these committees are not utilized to the fullest extent, the committee will fall far short of the anticipated results--indeed, it may become a total failure. With this thought in mind, the following suggestions are made, recognizing that no committee will be able to serve in all of the suggested areas.

1. Provide important communication between the vocational education program and the community.

2. Encourage young people to consider vocational education through speeches, career day meetings, school visits, and the like.

3. Assist in providing information concerning desirable aptitudes and the education and experience backgrounds applicants need for entry level jobs.

4. Help arrange field trip visits for students and counselors.

5. Assist in obtaining vocational guidance literature for teachers, counselors, and students.

6. Assist in surveys of local and state manpower needs.

7. Assist in development of aptitude tests, achievement tests, etc., related to initial employment of graduates.

8. Placing or helping to place students in jobs during the school year or summer vacations.

9. Assist in placing high school graduates in jobs.

10. Assist in preparation and review of budget requests for the vocational program.

11. Assist in development and review of courses of study in meeting changing needs.

12. Assist in evaluating the facilities, the adequacy of the equipment, and the layout of the shop and laboratory.

13. Provide assistance in obtaining needed equipment or supplies either on loan or at special prices.

14. Assist in the establishing of standards for the vocational program(s).

15. Assist in the establishment of fees for students involved in certain vocational programs.

16. Help establish and maintain a library of visual aids, magazines, and books in the vocational program.

17. Assist with preparation of the long-range vocational plan and in its revision.

18. Committee's advice is valuable in promoting the young and adult farmer program or in other adult programs.

19. Assist in upgrading the vocational teacher through field trips, work experience, and further education.

20. Assist in developing sample kits, charts, and posters for exhibit or instructional purposes in classroom and shop.

21. Help arrange meetings of teachers with people in industry to bring about a better relationship between school and industry.

22. Help provide summer employment for teachers when it is necessary for teacher to obtain job experience.

23. Assist in establishment of teacher qualification requirements.

24. Assist in finding substitutes and resource people from business and industry to assist the local instructor.

25. Conduct inservice programs for teachers of vocational education.

26. Set up an award and recognition system for outstanding teachers of vocational education.

27. Assist in selection of students for the program.

28. Assist in developing the program of work for the youth group, such as FFA, FHA, FBLA, etc.

29. Provide scholarships or other financial assistance to students wishing to continue into post-high programs.

30. Provide an award system for students in the program and assist instructor in selecting award winners.

31. Provide speakers to inform civic groups and others of the vocational education programs in the school.

32. Provide news stories to magazines, local news media, and others on the vocational program.

33. Participate in radio and TV programs designed to "sell" the vocational program.

34. Attend meetings on local and state level in support of vocational education programs.

35. Assist in evaluating local programs of vocational education.

36. Assist in influencing state and federal legislation favorable to vocational education.

37. Advise instructor regarding controversial issues.

38. Help maintain a continuous program when teacher and administration changes occur.

39. Assist in the identification of needed research in vocational education.

40. Assist teacher in "selling" the importance of the extended contract.

41. Gather evidence regarding community reaction to vocational programs.

42. Assist in establishing a teaching calendar which will lead to the development of abilities needed on the job as they are needed.

43. Make recommendations of possible candidates to fill vocational teacher openings.

44. Help school conform to state wage and hour laws in setting up a cooperative education program.

45. Assist in developing a philosophy of vocational education.

46. Assist in developing objectives of the vocational program.

47. Help provide funds for teachers to attend regional or national meetings of industry or teacher organizations.

48. Study curriculum--propose revisions or changes to consider.

49. Assist in articulating programs with the area vocational-technical school.

50. Assist in developing programs which may be formulated in cooperation with neighboring high schools.

Suggestions and Precautions in the Effective Utilization of Advisory Committees

1. The vocational instructor should be careful not to make the advisory committee "his" committee rather than a committee for the vocational area they represent.

2. The administrator should be involved from the very beginning in the planning and development of the committee.

3. The vocational instructor should seek assistance in selecting the committee in order to make the committee truly representative of all elements in the community concerned with the work of the vocational area represented. Such assistance could come from the administration, local vocational coordinator, the board of education, and others in the community.

4. Membership on the committee should be rotated after the second year so that a third of the members are replaced each year. At the time of initial appointment members should be designated as one, two, or three-year appointments. A committee with rotating terms invites fresh, enthusiasti ideas, and educates an increasing number of people with respect to the vocational program of the school. In some school districts, especially in

low population areas, it may not serve the committee to provide for rigid rotation. An advisory committee member who has proven to be a valuable contributor should be reappointed if he or she so desires.

5. Impress upon committee members that the committee is a creature of the board of education, that it is advisory in nature, and that its decisions may be over-ruled, although this is uncommon. One reason for committee failures is that the committee's duties are not clearly understood, nor the scope of their responsibilities defined. Committees should not be asked to make decisions that are clearly the responsibility of the teacher, the school, or the board of education.

6. It is advisable for a newly established committee to visit a meeting of an established and successful committee, or to bring in such representatives to speak to the new committee. Consultants in vocational education from the Department of Public Instruction are available upon request to assist in establishing new advisory committees or discuss other problems with the committee.

7. The vocational instructor should be careful not to dominate the committee. The most successful committees are those that provide leadership from within their group rather than leaning on the instructor.

8. Have a definite agenda for each meeting with the discussion centering on one topic. The members should leave the meeting with a feeling that something has been accomplished. Most committees have died from inactivity and disuse. Advisory committees thrive on involvement in the "gut issues" of the program.

A chairman of a Wisconsin high school advisory committee for a pilot program made the following comments to the question, "Do you feel that your committee has been effectively utilized in terms of the local pilot program?"

"So far there has been nothing but discussion. They have asked for no concrete suggestions - and though the discussions have been free and liberal, there is a feeling within the committee that they really don't want to change what they are doing now."

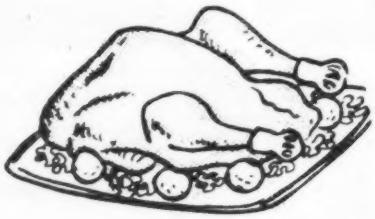
9. Good public relations are vital to the success of the committee. Public understanding depends upon the extent to which the school and general public are informed of the committee's work. The committee should receive recognition at school meetings, in local newspapers, the FFA banquet, and through other promotional activities or events.

10. The instructor should never use the advisory committee as a pressure group for his own interests upon the administration and board of education.

11. It is most important to remember that an advisory committee cannot overcome ineffective teaching. A dynamic program of vocational education and a youth group, such as the FFA, is vital to the success of the program. Do not expect advisory committees to accomplish miracles, but they can offer new challenges and valuable direction. Remember, it is generally too late to form a committee when the department is in trouble; this must be done before it happens.

12. Always start and close meetings on schedule. This is a philosophy important for all meetings, but is especially vital for advisory committees. Meetings tend to drag on unless this specific rule is followed. Some advisory committees meet during the noon hour over lunch at the school. In this manner they must assume strict adherence to the time schedule. For evening meetings it is important that the chairman understands the importance of starting on time and adjourning on time.

13. Avoid social activities more elaborate than a glass of milk (or a cup of coffee) and a roll served at the meeting. Time can be provided for social events if the council so desires, but separate such events from the regular business meetings.



14. A council member that cannot (or does not) attend the meetings, participate in committee activities, and respect the rules of propriety for a committee should be provided the opportunity to resign. The Madison Public Schools Advisory Committee Handbook states, "Absence from three consecutive meetings will indicate a lack of interest and the member will be replaced on the committee."

Why Have Many Wisconsin Vocational Instructors Been Reluctant to Use Advisory Committees?

There are undoubtedly numerous answers to this question--perhaps as many as there are teachers. Listed below is a partial list of reasons which may have contributed to the limited number of advisory committees in Wisconsin.

1. Many instructors seek informal advice from various people within the district and therefore, feel no need for a formal committee.

It is apparent from the number of vocational programs indicating that minutes of their advisory meetings are not available because such meetings are only held on an informal basis, that a problem exists in this area.

2. Time! Teacher time, administration time, member time - you name it! There is always something going on even in the smallest of towns. In a University of Wisconsin-River Falls study (included later in this brochure) it was found that the time element was the second most important problem in having effective advisory committees. In most discussions with instructors, it appears to be the most frequently stated concern.

3. Teacher preparation on using advisory committees has been woefully lacking. Our universities and the Department of Public Instruction have not placed sufficient emphasis on this area of teacher preparation and inservice programs. A popular song of several years ago was entitled, "Fools Rush in Where Angels Fear to Tread," and it is a foregone conclusion that teachers will not rush into an advisory committee if they have no understanding of how it functions and little awareness of its usefulness.

The DPI and our universities have made substantial improvement in providing courses and inservice programs on advisory committees in the past year for vocational teachers. This effort will be sustained so that teachers may feel secure in establishing and effectively utilizing their advisory committees.

4. Lack of encouragement provided by school administrators who look upon the advisory committee as another citizens' committee to please.

5. Teacher's fear of giving up some of his independence in decision making.

6. Teacher's fear of criticism and the possibility of being replaced.

7. Failure of advisory committees in neighboring districts which had failed largely because they were poorly organized.

8. Frequent changes in instructors in some schools.

9. Fear that the council will become something more than advisory in nature.

10. The need for an advisory committee must be evident to those who are going to use one effectively, and this has not been the situation with most instructors.

There are, of course, many other reasons. However, certainly at the top of the list must go lack of understanding and finding the time to do an adequate job in organizing an advisory committee.

Sample Minutes of Advisory Committee Meetings as Submitted to DPI

As stated earlier, all schools requesting Federal aid for Vocational Education programs are required to submit the minutes of their last advisory committee meeting. To illustrate the vast difference in how advisory committees function, listed below are a few selected samples of minutes submitted to the DPI.

***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** *****

AGRICULTURE

ADVISORY COMMITTEE
1972-73

Mr. Glen Holman, Agriculture Instructor

Mr. Leonard Prahl, Local Vocational Education Coordinator

Dr. Fred Vorlop, Principal

Mr. John McClellan, Chairman R. R. #2, Box 128 (1974) Delavan, WI 53115	Farmer Home Phone: 728-5301
Mr. Earl Gottschalk (1973) 232 East Jackson Darien, WI 53114	Darien Elevator & Feed Home Phone: 724-3270 Business Phone: 724-3377
Mr. Roger Wuttke (1974) R. R. #2, Box 15 Delavan, WI 53115	Farm-City Elevator--Darien, WI Home Phone: 728-3237 Business Phone: 724-5034
Mr. Joe Bores (1973) R. R. #5, Highway 15 Delavan, WI 53115	J & B Garden Center Home Phone: 728-9069 Business Phone: 728-6066
Mr. Stanley Ihlenfeldt Agriculture Business Agent Elkhorn, WI 53121	County Agent Home Phone: 723-4227 Business Phone: 723-4900
Mr. Roger Holt (1974) R. R. #2 Elkhorn, WI 53121	Farmer Home Phone: 728-6955
Mr. Bill Blakely (1973) R. R. #2, Box 84 Darien, WI 53114	Libby McNeill & Libby Home Phone: 724-5508 Business Phone: 724-3266
Mr. Kenneth Addie (1975) 5 Burr Oak Court Delavan, WI 53115	Sta-Rite Industries, Inc. Home Phone: 728-5062 Business Phone: 728-5551
Mr. Donald Behlman (1975) R. R. #2 Delavan, WI 53115	Donald H. Behlman Sales & Service Home Phone: 724-3653
Mr. Ronald Meyer (1975) R. R. #2 Darien, WI 53114	Farmer Home Phone: 724-3406

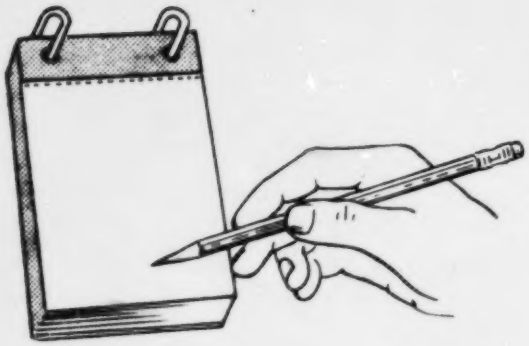
MINUTES
of
AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
November 29, 1972
7:30 P.M.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:45 p.m. BY PRESIDENT ROGER WUTKE.

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Glen Holman	Kenneth Addie
	Earl Gottschalk	Roger Holt
	Joe Bores	Stan Ihlenfeldt
	Ron Meyers	Larry Schneider
MEMBERS ABSENT:	John McClellan	
	Don Behlman	

THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING WERE READ AND APPROVED.

Mr. Holman passed out sheets listing the functions an advisory committee on vo-ag may perform. He discussed the meeting held to explain the CERS study so committee members might get an idea as to what needs to be done to improve the vocational education department. The sheets passed out listed 18 objectives for an advisory committee to consider in making recommendations and assisting in the program. Several of the objectives were discussed by the members.



Glen then passed out an itemized list of 8 objectives for agriculture in 1972-73. These objectives were discussed with special emphasis on #8 which dealt with reviewing present programs in our state which are facing the enrollment of more urban students in their department and less production agriculture students.

Mr. Holman gave a report on student enrollment in the different grades and the number enrolled from farms and those from urban areas. He discussed the problems with semester courses and the difficulty in maintaining continuity in the program.

He noted the need for an intern due to the wide area of supervision, the increased number of students in vo-ag, and developing the cooperative program in Sales, Service and Supply.

Glen discussed what several of the students are doing, and was pleased to report the progress being made, and how well the students are doing in the program this year over last year.

Roger asked if there was any new business to come before the committee.

Mr. Holman advised that he welcomes open discussion and hoped we wouldn't be a rubber stamp committee, but would feel free to talk about ideas and experiences, especially perhaps, the students' side of it, their problems, and feelings.

A short recess was called for coffee and doughnuts, followed by Mr. Holman passing out booklets on vocational education programs of work of the Delavan-Darien FFA Chapter.

Mr. Bores asked what the goal was for the future after the year was over and what their committee might do to secure an assistant for Mr. Holman.

Mr. Holman advised 10 to 15 replacements would be maximum and that it might be an area where the committee could help especially if enrollment stays up to approximately 110 and over.

Motion made and seconded to adjourn at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Blakely, Secretary

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MINUTES

OFFICE EDUCATION MEETING
April 26, 1973

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m., April 26, by Sue Larson, Office Education Coordinator. The meeting was attended by future cooperative education students, their parents, and the advisory committee members. The special purpose of the meeting was to inform students and parents of the technicalities of the clerical and secretarial programs.

Sue Larson welcomed the audience and explained the purpose of the meeting. She defined cooperative education as a cooperative venture between student, parents, employer, and school. She also explained the units of study that have been covered by the girls during the junior year in office training. These areas should enable the student to be able to step into an office career much easier and smoother than many students who do not have the opportunity.

Next, students in the secretarial and clerical office education programs during 1972-73 explained details of the programs. Sue Scott, employed at Hansen Realty, explained the requirements for the office programs. Typing I, Typing II, and office training are required before a student will be admitted into clerical practice. Typing I, Typing II, and Shorthand I are required of secretarial students. Other business courses are strongly recommended.

Sue explained about how students are placed in their office positions. Miss Larson consults with the students to find out where their interest lies. After the consultation she attempts to locate positions where the students can use their office abilities and get an accurate overall view of an office. In some cases, students like to find their own jobs. In that case, the job must be approved by Miss Larson, after she has explained the program to the potential employer.

Susan Venema, employed at Waling Chevrolet, Oldsmobile, & Cadillac, emphasized some of the benefits that she has derived from being a participant in the clerical program during 1972-73. She explained how her office position has given her confidence in herself and how she has learned many things about an office that cannot be taught in the classroom.

Connie Logterman, employed at Lake Lawn Lodge, told of the benefits that employers may derive from employing a student-learner. Employers are able to do a community service and work with the school, as well as train potential full-time employees.

Connie also mentioned that there may be a few disadvantages of the program. There might be less time for extra-curricular activities; although if time is budgeted, students can get school work done at school. She also cautioned parents that it may seem that their children are out of the home more, but they are learning many beneficial things.

Connie explained the functions of the advisory committee. They have helped locate positions, advised on curriculum and equipment changes, and helped to bridge the gap between school and the business world. They also advise on changes taking place now and in the future throughout business.

Joan Carpenter, a future secretarial student and president of FBLA, explained how FBLA helps business students prepare for future careers and for their future lives. Community projects, school projects, field trips, organizing activities, opportunities to talk with business leaders, and participation in state and national conferences are all vital components of the FBLA Club. Office education students are strongly urged to join Future Business Leaders of America so that they can become strong, aggressive business leaders and strong community members.

Miss Larson gave a few closing comments about the success of the program, and a tour of the office education facilities was given by Mary Scott, future secretarial student. Mary explained the equipment that students have an opportunity to learn to operate.

A demonstration of the simulation project that is used during the last quarter of the junior year was given by the junior students. Parents and advisory committee could observe the skills that students are learning to put together during this project. The project calls for skills in office equipment and also the skills of communicating and interacting with people. The simulation project is used to prepare students for the world of work before they are actually on the job.

The last item of business was a social hour with refreshments provided by the senior office education students.

***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** *****

The minutes listed above are for two vocational areas in the Delavan-Darien High School. Listed below are other samples in which the schools will not be identified, but are nonetheless actual samples of advisory committee meetings.

***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** *****

MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

(Vocational Agriculture)

DATE: April 25, 1973

TIME: 8:00 P.M.

PLACE: High School Agriculture Classroom

The meeting was called to order with six of the six vocational committee members present. The 1972-73 enrollment reports and the follow-up report of the 1972 graduates were presented and discussed. The committee requested the possibility of a follow-up study on the graduates for the past five years be conducted. This will be done in the fall of 1973.

A review of the agriculture curriculum was made and discussed. After some discussion, the committee recommended that any student who has completed Agriculture 9 & 10 with a "c" or better grade should have the right to waive the Biology requirement. The committee also recommended that a co-op work program be developed and put into operation in the near future.

One member of the committee was selected to serve on a central committee to work on an even greater coordination between the academic and vocational curriculum.

The meeting was closed with a tour of the enlarged Agriculture T & I shop facilities.

***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** *****

ADVISORY COUNCIL

VO-AG and SMALL ENGINES

Meeting: May 9, 8:00 P.M., High School

1) Call meeting to order

2) Discussed function of an advisory council

3) Reviewed new applications

   a) Vocational Agriculture

   b) Small Engines

   Committee members approved the programs and were asked to make suggestions about equipment lists and course content.

4) Set next meeting date

5) Meeting adjourned

***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** *****

Minutes

Agriculture Advisory Committee

May 2, 1973

The makeup of the advisory committee was discussed. It is agreed the committee will be expanded to include representatives from agri-business as well as farming.

The committee complimented Mr. _____ on the continued growth in enrollment.

Concern was pressed by the committee on space for agriculture classes since the

_____ school is out of the question for the time being. There appears to be little solution for the problem.

The curriculum was discussed and approved.

_____, Secretary

***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** *****

Here are minutes that are more than a year old and included for the wrong fiscal year.

***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** *****

The _____ High School Agriculture Advisory Committee Meeting was held on April 14, 1972.

Minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

First on the agenda was a review of the summer program.

Next we discussed any changes that should be made in the 1972-73 school year curriculum. It was decided the curriculum should be geared to interest the city students. Also discussed was the idea of going to the semester system.

The last item on the agenda was a review of the equipment available and the needs for additional equipment.

***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** *****

"Do you think he's trying to tell us something?"

Letters such as the one below are not altogether uncommon.

Department of Public Instruction
126 Langdon Street
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Sir:

I am writing this letter regarding the lack of Advisory Committee meeting minutes with my VE-3 Form for the upcoming school year.

I have a very effective and valuable advisory committee which functions in their capacity very well. Our meetings, however, have been conducted so far in a rather informal manner and as such no officers have been elected. I keep some skeleton minutes in my meeting notes but nothing really concrete. Even on this informal basis, this committee has done me and the program a world of good from the standpoint of support and direction.

I do plan on next year organizing this group of people on a more formal basis and have the meetings conducted as they ought.

Sincerely,

***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** *****

June 27, 1973

Mr. F. J. Doering
Agriculture Consultant
Department of Public Instruction
126 Langdon Street
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Mr. Doering:

Reference your request for minutes of the last advisory committee meeting regarding application _____.

Mr. _____ has left our system effective at the end of the school year... June 1, 1973. Because of the press of the classroom situation he did not hold a meeting of this committee.

Mr. _____ has been hired for the position and has started work under the summer program as of June 25, 1973. As soon as he becomes acquainted with the position and members of the committee a meeting will be held and the minutes of that meeting will be forwarded to your office.

Should you need further information on this matter, please contact me.

Sincerely,

District Administrator

APPENDIX I

The advisory committee has not been initiated during this past year for a number of reasons. Basically, the school district consolidated, built, and opened a new high school during the past year. Because of the need for development of the FFA and shop phase of the program time did not permit utilization of the committee on a formal basis. It should be noted that individual committee members were continuously consulted throughout the year.

It is the specific intent to reactivate the committee during 1973-74. Specifically, the committee will be relied upon heavily as the present curriculum is evaluated and modified during 1973-74 for 1974-75.

***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** ***** *****

These samplings of advisory committee minutes and letters indicate quite clearly that problems exist in the formulation of such committees. It should be noted, however, that vast improvement has taken place in the past few years and much improvement can be anticipated in the years immediately ahead. In fact, most vocational programs in Wisconsin today are making effective use of their advisory committees.

This improvement is substantiated by two studies made at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in 1968 and 1972. The findings and recommendations in a study made by Tom Parslow in 1968:

WISCONSIN STATE UNIVERSITY
RIVER FALLS
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE EDUCATION

Value of Advisory Councils as Perceived by Selected
Wisconsin High School Vocational Agriculture
Instructors and Administrators

By Tom Parslow
Instructor in Agriculture
Mauston High School

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to determine the value of advisory councils to a high school vocational agriculture program as perceived by selected Wisconsin Vocational Agriculture Instructors and High School Administrators.

Methods: The study was conducted over a six week period through the use of questionnaires to sixty-four Wisconsin Vocational Agriculture Instructors and their Administrator. A ninety percent return indicated that twenty-five percent had advisory councils and sixty-five percent did not have a council in the vocational agriculture department.

Findings: The twenty advisory councils had existed for a little over five years. Fifteen of the councils were being used for the entire department while the rest were used for the adult farmer program only. The average number of members was seven which met three times a year. The council membership was determined by different means. Five of the councils were appointed by the instructor while three were elected by the adult farmers with the remainder being selected in various ways.

The majority of the instructors and administrators without advisory councils desired the establishment of a council. Their school boards were also in favor of using advisory councils.

Conclusions:

1. There was a low number of formal advisory councils in the state of Wisconsin. Many of the councils thought to be in existence by the State Department of Public Instruction did not actually exist.

2. There was a lack of communication between the instructors and their administrators concerning the use of advisory councils. Some administrators did not realize that a council was being used by the instructor or whether one did or did not exist.

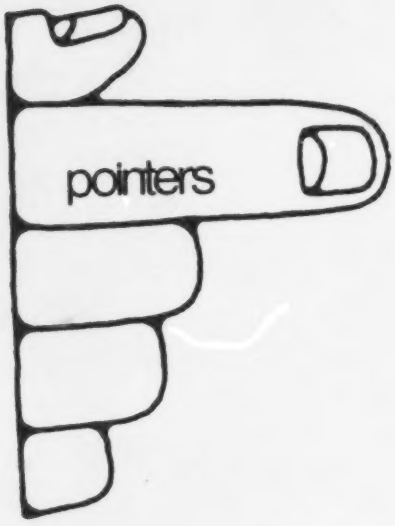
3. Overall, the advisory council was considered useful by the respondents in all areas except for the advising of the Future Farmers of America. The advisory council could determine the agriculture needs of the community for both the all-day classes and the adult program. Other tasks that the council could perform were: promoting the vocational agriculture program, providing information to the instructor, and the determining, recommending, and evaluating policies.

4. The council should not be used to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching, plan the teacher's instructional procedure or help supervise farming programs for the all-day class program. Neither should the council plan the teacher's instructional procedure, evaluate teacher effectiveness, organize field trips, aid young farmers in getting started farming, or organize the annual banquet.

5. The short time in which Wisconsin advisory councils existed could have been caused partially by the lack of a charter or constitution to govern the activities of the council. Without direction, the council members could have become very disinterested in the council's activities because of the lack of organization within the council structure.

6. The majority of the administrators and instructors without advisory councils desired the establishment of a council and felt that they had value in performing certain tasks. However, they felt that these tasks could be performed by other means since the instructor did not have sufficient time to organize or maintain a council.

Recommendations:



1. A study should be conducted to discover the extent to which there is a lack of communication between vocational agriculture instructors and administrators. This study, along with an all-out effort to keep administrators informed of the activities of the department of vocational agriculture, would greatly improve the vocational agriculture program.

2. The Vocational Division of the State Department of Public Instruction and Colleges of Agriculture in the state should make available information concerning the establishment and use of advisory councils. The vocational agriculture instructor, with his administrator, should use this information to determine whether or not they could use an advisory council for their department.

3. A study should be conducted to determine the way that vocational agriculture instructors spend their time. Such a study should be used to improve the situation of a lack of time for instructors to accomplish activities that would improve their program.

4. A study should also be conducted to determine the manner in which decisions are made in departments of vocational agriculture. The results of such a study could, if used properly, help new instructors entering the vocational agriculture occupation.

William Peterson's thesis, "Status of Advisory Councils for High School Vocational Agriculture Departments in Wisconsin," (1972) depicts the progress being made, but indicates much remains to be done.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine the status of advisory councils in the high school vocational agriculture departments in Wisconsin. Specifically the objectives of the study were:

1. To determine the background characteristics concerning the advisory council.

2. To determine the relationship between the high school vocational agriculture teacher's years of teaching

experiences and the importance he placed upon the operational procedures of the council.

3. To determine the relationship between the high school vocational agriculture teacher's years of teaching experience and his perceived values of the basic functions of the council.

The hypotheses for the study stated in the null form were:

1. There was no significant difference between the importance placed upon the operational procedures of the council and the number of years of teaching experience of the instructor.

2. There was no significant difference between the perceived values of the functions of advisory councils by vocational agriculture instructors and the number of years of teaching experience of these instructors.

The study was designed to cover six and one-half weeks. A questionnaire was used to obtain the information for the study. This questionnaire was sent out to all of the high school vocational agriculture departments in Wisconsin. Usable data were obtained from 221 vocational agriculture instructors of the 242 respondents. Twenty-one of the 242 respondents did not have an organized advisory council. The data obtained were tabulated and the chi-square test of significance was applied to the data that was to be tested at the .05 percent level. The instructors were grouped into three teaching experience categories. The following results were found: 0-5 years of teaching experience, 73 respondents; 6-20 years of teaching experience, 89 respondents; and 21+ years of teaching experience, 59 respondents. The average enrollment per school was found to be 555 students in grades 9-12 with 77 students enrolled in the vocational agriculture department and 64 FFA members per chapter. Young and adult farmer programs averaged 23 persons per school reporting.

Background Characteristics of the Councils Surveyed

1. The advisory councils in Wisconsin had organized about three and one-half years on the average. The range for this characteristic was from two and one-half for the 0-5 year group to almost four and one-half for the 21+ year group. About one-fifth of the councils worked under an official charter of constitution. The average number of members on the councils was 8.8 which met about two and one-half times a year to conduct their business.

2. Farmers and businessmen made up over half of the average council membership (5.6 of the 8.8 members).

3. There were 15 agriculture departments who included women on their advisory councils.

4. Selection of membership was accomplished in various ways. In over 60 percent of the councils it was up to either the agriculture instructor solely or the combined efforts of the agriculture instructor, LVEC, and school

board. Only four percent of the councils had their members selected solely by the school board.

5. The agriculture instructor was a non-voting member on three-fourths of the councils (76 percent). A member of the administration was included as a non-voting member on half of the councils while a member of the school board functioned in that capacity on one-fifth of the councils surveyed.

6. The majority of the councils (70 percent) retained their members for three year terms of membership. About one-fifth of the councils had their members serve two year terms, one-tenth for four or more year terms, and two councils indicated that their members served one year terms.

7. Close to two-thirds of the councils (63 percent) favored the procedure of allowing the members to succeed themselves on the council after their terms had expired.

8. The number of meetings ranged from one to nine per council. About six-tenths of the councils met two or three times a year. Just under one-fifth met only once a year.

9. Over nine-tenths of the councils met for night meetings. No morning meetings were reported.

10. In all cases but one the instructors indicated that their administrators were in favor of the use of an advisory council.

11. The most important problem of the advisory councils was that council members didn't feel qualified to advise agriculture programs. The second leading problem as indicated by the instructors was the lack of time by the instructor. These two problems were ranked one and two by all three teaching experience groups. There was inconsistency between the three groups in their rankings of the third through seventh problem areas. They were: 3rd, constructive criticisms made by members lacking in knowledge; 4th, advice can be gotten elsewhere; 5th, lack of preparation at the college level; 6th, frequent change of instructors; and 7th, lack of interest by members of the council. There was consistency between the three groups in their rankings of the lowest three problem areas. These were 8th, council did not represent the community; 9th, council became a pressure group; and 10th, bad feelings were created between the council and school board and/or administration. The 21+ year group followed the composite ranking most closely of the three groups with only the 7th, 8th, and 9th rankings switched.

Operational Procedure of the Council

1. A set schedule of meetings was felt to be important to the council by 51 percent of the 218 instructors.

2. Two hundred fourteen of the 218 instructors (98 percent) were of the opinion that a prepared agenda for each meeting was important for the successful operation of a council.

3. Eighty-seven percent of the 216 instructors surveyed had the opinion that members should be kept informed by having copies of the minutes disseminated from each meeting and that a permanent record of each meeting be kept.

4. Seventy percent of the 217 instructors were of the opinion that it was important that officers be elected by the advisory council.

5. The agriculture instructor should not be the chairman of the advisory council according to the 177 instructors out of the 217 respondents (82 percent) who indicated that it was important that someone other than the agriculture instructor be the chairman.

6. Most of the 215 instructors (71 percent) formed the opinion that it was not important for the successful operation of the advisory council that the councils have charters or constitutions under which to work.

7. There was no significant difference between the importance placed on the operational procedures of the council and the number of years of teaching experience of the instructor.

Value of the Functions of Advisory Councils

1. Ninety percent of the 218 instructors perceived "much" to "very much value" in using the council to provide communication between the vocational program and the community.

2. Fifty-four percent of the 217 instructors surveyed perceived "little" or "no value" in using the council to assist in manpower surveys.

3. About two-thirds of the 218 instructors were of the opinion that there was "little" or "no value" in providing speakers for community groups on the vocational education program or publicizing their vocational programs through the newspaper, radio, and TV.

4. Fifty-one percent, 58 percent, 49 percent and 56 percent of the instructors surveyed placed "much" to "very much value" on the advisory council's functions of respectively: (1) assisting in career programs; (2) providing information to students for entry level jobs; (3) helping to place students on jobs; and (4) helping to set up agricultural cooperative education programs.

5. Over two-thirds of the 218 instructors (67 percent) perceived "much" or "very much value" in using the council to assist in the upgrading of the vocational agriculture instructor with field trips, work experience and education.

6. Just over half of the 218 instructors (52 percent) felt that it was important for the council to encourage teachers and council members to attend vocational education meetings.

7. The functions of making recommendations for teaching openings and helping to provide funds for teachers to attend teacher or industry meetings were thought to be of "little" or "no value" by 72 percent and 85 percent of the respondents, respectively.

8. The following functions were perceived by the majority of the agriculture instructors to have "much" or "very much value" for the advisory councils: (1) help develop and review courses of study and curriculum by 191 of the 218 instructors (87 percent); (2) assist in the preparation of the long range plan for the local agriculture department by 158 of the 218 instructors (73 percent); (3) promote young and adult farmer programs by 142 of the 211 instructors (68 percent); (4) help develop objectives for the agriculture program by 152 of the 213 instructors (73 percent); (5) help to evaluate the local vocational program by 184 of the 218 instructors (85 percent); (6) assist in the evaluation of the facilities, equipment, and shop and laboratory layout by 168 of the 218 instructors (78 percent); and (7) help to find resource persons by 127 of the 215 instructors (59 percent).

9. The following three functions were perceived to be of "little" to "no value" by the majority of the agriculture instructors surveyed: (1) assisting in the development of instructional materials by 138 of the 218 instructors (63 percent); (2) helping articulate programs with technical schools by 121 of the 213 instructors (56 percent); and (3) helping develop programs with neighboring schools by 146 of the 213 agriculture instructors (68 percent).

10. There was no significant difference between the perceived values of the functions of advisory councils by vocational agriculture instructors and the number of years of teaching experience of these instructors except in the area of using the council to evaluate the facilities, equipment and the layout of the shop and laboratory. It was found that the 0-5 year group held a higher value for the task (49 percent perceived "very much value") than did the 6-20 year group (31 percent perceived "very much value") and the 21+ group (32 percent perceived "very much value").

Overall Value of the Advisory Council

The majority of the 216 agriculture instructors (78 percent) perceived "much" to "very much value" for the overall value of an advisory council to function for the entire vocational agriculture program. Two respondents saw "no value" in using an advisory council.

In view of the findings of this study the following conclusions were made:

1. Not all of the vocational agriculture departments in Wisconsin had organized advisory councils even though to receive vocational funding they were required to have an organized council.

2. The typical advisory council had existed for approximately three years with an average of nine members who were allowed to succeed themselves on the council. The council met two to three times yearly; most likely did not have a charter; and were mostly constituted by farmers and businessmen. The members were selected by the vocational agriculture instructor with help from the LVEC and approved by the school board. The council was backed by the administration who most likely was a non-voting member of the council as was the vocational agriculture instructor.

3. The responses by the three teaching experience groups were quite consistent for the rankings of the number one and two problems confronting advisory councils. The most important problem which faced the councils as determined by the agriculture instructors was that council members did not feel they were qualified to advise the agriculture program. The second leading problem was the lack of time for the instructor to adequately maintain a council properly. The third overall ranked problem was that the agriculture instructor felt that the council members were not knowledgeable enough to constructively criticize the agriculture department. This seemed to indicate that a problem may have existed concerning the instructors' lack of confidence in the advisory council members. There was also disagreement between the teaching experience groups as to the ranking of some of the problems.

4. Regularly scheduled meetings should be an important operational procedure of the advisory council. Each meeting should have a prepared agenda. After each meeting the minutes should be disseminated to the members. The council should elect a set of officers but should not allow the agriculture instructor to be chairman of this council. A charter is not important to the success of the advisory council.

5. Advisory councils should perform the following functions: (1) provide communication between the vocational program and the community; (2) assist in developing career programs; (3) assist in the upgrading of the vocational agriculture instructor with field trips, work experience and education; (4) assist in the preparation of the long range vocational plan; (5) help to develop and review courses of study and curriculum; (6) promote the young and adult farmer programs; (7) help evaluate facilities, equipment, and shop and laboratory layouts; (8) help to develop objectives for

the vocational agriculture program; and (9) help evaluate the local vocational agriculture program.

6. It was not determined conclusively, but the results indicated that the councils were of some value in: (1) providing information for students on entry level jobs; (2) helping to place students on jobs; (3) helping to set up agricultural cooperative education programs; (4) encouraging teachers and council members to attend vocational education meetings; and (5) finding resource persons for vocational agriculture programs.

7. Advisory councils should not concern themselves with the following tasks: (1) assist in manpower surveys; (2) provide speakers for community groups on vocational education; (3) publicize their vocational programs; (4) provide funds for vocational teachers to attend meetings of teachers or industry; (5) assist in the development of instructional materials; (6) articulate programs with the technical schools; and (7) develop programs with neighboring schools.

8. The local advisory council is very important to the local vocational agriculture program in Wisconsin.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study the following recommendations were made:

1. Administrative personnel and advisory council members should be surveyed with similar questions so that their ideas, comments and suggestions could further the successful use of the advisory councils.

2. A follow-up study should be made in the area of problems encountered by advisory councils.

3. A study should be made to find out if the use of a charter has any effect on the success of a council.

4. A further study should be made to see what effect the number of meetings held by a council during the year has on the overall success of an advisory council.

5. A pamphlet should be written and published by the State Department of Public Instruction and the Colleges of Agriculture in Wisconsin concerning the

use of advisory councils and be made available to all vocational agriculture educators, school personnel (administrators and board members), and advisory council members.

6. The information from this study should be incorporated into in-service and pre-service training of people in the agricultural education field.

Sample Forms

Little purpose would be served here in adding possible forms that could be used in establishing an advisory council. A sample charter, by-laws, etc., may be found in Handbook on Agricultural Education in Public Schools, by Lloyd J. Phipps, pages 52-60.

Summary

In the maelstrom of change in agriculture and the other vocational areas, the role of the advisory committee is becoming increasingly important. Agriculture educators cannot ignore their responsibility to the rural non-farm and urban populations, as well as to the farm population. The vast complex of agri-business must be served in the most efficient manner. Meeting the requirements of the technological advances in farming and the increased demands for manpower in the supporting services is such a gigantic task that vocational agriculture needs all the help it can get. Similar conditions exist in distributive education, business and office education, trade and industrial education, home economics, and health occupations.

The best source of assistance is the advisory committee. If this resource remains untapped, it is not unreasonable to assume that not only will some vocational programs fail to meet the changing needs, but in some communities they will be dropped from the curriculum in the comprehensive high school. It is time to "phone or get out of the booth."

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